

Message Text

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45

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 IO-10 /080 W

----- 061582

R 300901Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2578

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, DM, NI, TO

SUBJECT: OPENING OF TOGO-BENIN BORDER

REF: A. COTONOU 1969, B. COTONOU 1970 C. LAGOS 12689

1. PRESS RELEASE OF DECEMBER 24 CLAIMS THAT FOLLOWING VISIT OF TOGOLESE PRESIDENT EYADEMA, NIGERIAN HEAD OF STATE MURTALA MUHAMMED "INTERVENED" IN BORDER CLOSING DISPUTE BETWEEN TOGO AND BENIN, AND THAT (BY IMPLICATION AS RESULT OF MUHAMMED'S INTERVENTION) EYADEMA PROMISED DECLARE HIS SIDE OF BORDER OPEN EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 24. NEWS RELEASE GOES ON TO CLAIM "HIGH LEVEL" FMG DELEGATION "INTERVENED" WITH BENINOIS PRESIDENT KEREKOU, "WHO ALSO AGREED TO OPEN HIS BORDERS WITH TOGO TO ALL TRAFFIC," CONCLUDES THAT BORDERS BETWEEN TOGO AND BENIN "HAVE NOW BEEN OPENED FROM TODAY AND ALL TRAFFIC BETWEEN NIGERIA AND TOGO CAN NOW MOVE FREELY." EDITORIAL IN /DAILY TIMES/ DECEMBER 29 BESTOWS LAURELS UPON NIGERIA FOR
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ENDING DESPUTE, HAILS "VICTORY FOR ECOWAS," SUGGESTS THAT

TOGO AND BENIN SEEK NIGERIAN ASSISTANCE IN COMPLETING AMICABLE SETTLEMENT OF THEIR DIFFERENCES.

2. PERHAPS COINCIDENTALLY, BENINOIS DIPLOMAT ABEL ZINSOU MADE FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE SINCE ALLEGED ATTEMPT BY BENINOIS AGENTS TO KIDNAP HIM, IMMEDIATELY BOARDED PLANE AND FLEW OFF JOIN "RELATION" IN PARIS.

3. COMMENT: REFTELS A AND B IMPLY THAT BORDER PROBLEM STILL NOT SOLVED, THAT KEREKOU BASICALLY HAS NOT BUDGED FROM HIS REFUSAL PERMIT TOGOLESE ENTER BENIN. FMG THUS FAR HAS DISPLAYED EXEMPLARY PATIENCE IN DEALING WITH BENIN AND TOGO, AND MAY CONTINUE DOING SO. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, PERSONAL REPUTATION OF HEAD OF STATE MUHAMMED IS ON LINE, AND WHEN IT BECOMES CLEAR HIS GOOD OFFICES HAVE BEEN SHUNNED, NIGERIAN TONE COULD CHANGE ABRUPTLY.
EASUM

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